Cossacks are as stubborn as devils. We are just wasting time with them. What do you think, Tushin?"

"Let them have their way," the small sailor remarked casually. "I rather like their guts."

The chairman wrote: "Lenin and Trotsky will withdraw from the government and abstain from any public activity until they have cleared themselves of the charge of having worked for the enemy." I offered an amendment: "Lenin and Trotsky will abstain from any public activity until the accusations against them of having worked for the enemy and *against democracy* are investigated by the Constituent Assembly."

Dybenko turned toward me like a furious bull. "You are no Cossack, mister! What are you doing here?"

"I am the Commissar of the Northern Front and of this task force," I replied.

The chairman backed me up: "The Citizen Commissar is our man."

"He may be your man, but we are here to negotiate directly with the Cossacks, without middlemen," shouted Dybenko, pounding the table with his fists. "No amendments or no truce!"

The chairman did not insist on my amendment. He read the whole agreement aloud. It began with the declaration that the Cossacks and other military units belonging to the task force assembled under the command of General Krasnov at Gatchina would stop fighting against the Petrograd garrison. Then came the clause assuring safe-conduct for all participants in the campaign, other men and officers of the Third Cavalry Corps with members of their families, and all Cossack regiments stationed in and around Petrograd. This was followed by clauses about the arrested officers and students of military schools and about Kerensky, Lenin, and Trotsky. In view of the relative forces of the two parties, the truce agreement was amazingly favorable to the Cossacks.[16]

The chairman of the committee took the signed document to Krasnov. The general ordered all the sentries around the palace to retire and all troops to assemble in the courtyard. It took time to get the men together. Petrograd soldiers, sailors, and workers with rifles and cartridge belts filled the palace and the courtyard, leaving only a place in the center where the Cossacks stood in a rigid square, each

[16] It was signed by Dybenko and Tushin in the name of the Soviet of the People's Commissars, but the latter declined to ratify it, pointing out that the delegates had exceeded their authority. They had been authorized to arrange a cease-fire and not to negotiate a peace agreement with the Cossacks. The People's Commissars honored only the clauses relating to the Third Corps and other Cossack regiments.